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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 000169

SIPDIS

FOR WHA/PDA (OHILTON); WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, JANUARY 22, 2004

1. Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 1/24 entitled "No Access". "Within the package of Constitutional reforms approved by Congress, there is a new concept called Habeas Data, which was closes access to public information, even though it isn't part of the political agreements negotiated by the parties in Congress, and it's still mostly unknown by the people."

"At first, the concept of Habeas Data tries to protect any person's honor, and his or hers personal and familiar life. However, this new Constitutional clause could have such a wide scope that and may be subject to an anti-democratic interpretation. For instance, it may be used to forbid the disclosure of publications, information or opinions that could be of interest to the population in general, but they can't be disclosed because they might appear to damage the particular interests of certain person or group."

"That's why this new concept has produced concern in the population, because they feel it should have been discussed in a more comprehensive manner, to avoid any doubt of its content and goals."

Palmer